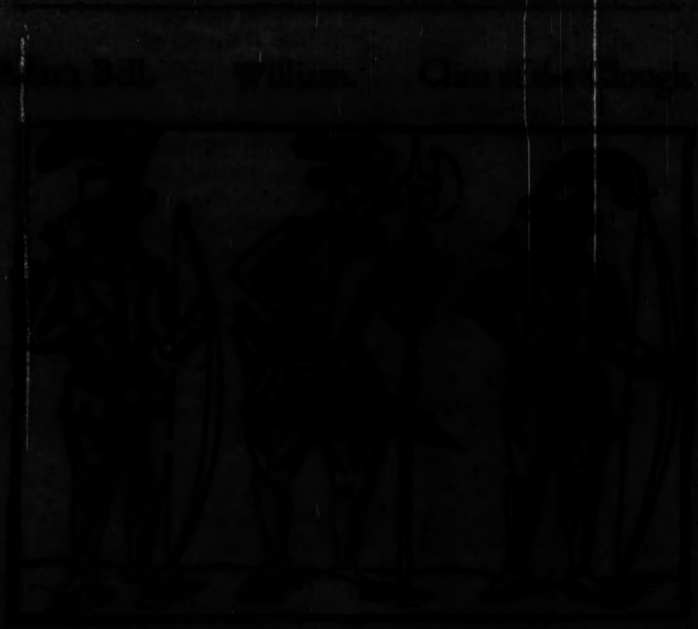
Adam Bell, Clim of the Clough, and William of Cloudesle.



London, Printed by E. Cotes, for Francis Grove dwelling upon Saresbil, 1640.

BIBLIOTHECA·BODLEIANA·

BIBLIOTHECA·BODLEIANA·

Adam Bell.

MERRY it was in the green Forest,
among the leaues green:
Where as men hunt east and west,
with bowes and arrowes keen.
To raise the Deere out of their den,
such sights haue not oft been seene:
As by three yeomen of the North Country,
by them it is I meane.
The one of them height Adam Bell,
another Clim of the Clough,
The third was William of Cloudesle,
an Archer good enough.
They were outlawed for venison,
these yeomen euery chone:
They swore them brethren on a day,
to English wood for to gone.
Now lith and listen Gentlemen,
that of mirth loueth to heare:
Two of them were single men,
the third had wedded fere.
William was the wedded man,
much more then was his care:
He said to his brethren on a day,
to Carlile he would fare.
There to speak with faire Alice his wife,
and with his children three:
By my troth said Adam Bell,
not by the counsell of me.
For if we go to Carlile brother,
and from this wild wood wend,
If that the Justice doe you take,
your life is at an end.

If that I come not to morrow brother,
by prime to you again:
Dare you then that I am taken,
or else that I am slain.
He took his leave of his brethren two,
and to Carlile, he is gone:
There he knocked at his own window,
shortly and anon.
Where be you fair Alice? he said,
my wife and children three?
Lightly let in thine own husband,
William of Cloudesle.
Alas then said faire Alice,
and sighed very sore,
This place hath been bereft for you,
full half a years and more.
Now I am here into Cloudesle,
I would that in I were:
Now fetch us meat and drink enough,
and let us make good cheer,
She fetcht him meat and drink plenty,
like a true wedded wife:
And pleased him with what she had,
whom she loved as her life.
There lay an old wife in that place,
a little before the fire:
Which William had found of charity,
more then seven yeere.
Up she rose, and forth she goes,
ebill might she speed there for:
For she had not set no foot on ground,
in seven years before.
She went into the Justice hall,
as fast as she could hie:
This night she said he come to towne,

William

William of Cloudeſle.
Thereat the Juſtice was full fain,
and ſo the Sheriff alſo.
Thou ſhalt not trabell hither for nought,
thy meed thou ſhalt habe ere thou goe.
They gabe to her a right good gowne,
of Scarlet it was I heard ſein:
She tooke the gift and home ſhe went,
and couched her downe again.
They raiſed the towne of merry Carlile.
in all the haſte they can:
And thronging faſt unto the houſe,
as faſt as they might gan;
There they beſet the good yeoman,
about on ebery ſide:
William heard great noiſe of the folk,
that thither-ward faſt hide.
Alice opened a back windowe,
and looked all about:
She was ware of the Juſtice and Sheriff,
and with that a great rout.
Alas treaſon, then cryed Alice,
eber woe may thou be:
Goe into my chamber husband, ſhe ſaid,
ſweet William of Couldeſle.
He took his ſword and his buckler,
his bow and children three:
And went into the ſtrongeſt chamber,
where he thought ſureſt to be.
Faire Alice like a lober true,
with a Pollax in her hand:
Said, he ſhall dye that commeth in
this booze, while I may ſtand.
Cloudeſle bent a right good bow,
that was of a truſty tree:

He smote the Justice on the breast,
that his arrow burst in three.
Gods curse on his heart said William,
this day thy coate did on.
If it had beene no better then mine,
it had been neere the bone.
Yeeld thee Cloudesle said the Justice,
and thy bow and thy arrowes thee fro:
Gods curse on his heart, said faire Alice,
that my husband counselleth so.
Set fire on the house said the Sheriffe,
sith no better it will be:
And burne we therein, William he saith,
his wife and children three.
They fired the house in many a place,
the fire flew on hye:
Alas then said faire Alice,
I see we here shall dye.
William opened a back window,
that was in his chamber hie:
And there with sheets he did let downe,
his wife and children three:
For Christs love do them no harme,
but wreak you all on me.
William shot so wonders well,
till his arrowes were all gone:
And fire so fast about him fell,
that his bow-string burnt in two.
The speeches burnt and fell upon,
good William of Cloudesle.
But then was he a woefull man,
and said, thinke a Cowards death to me.
Lever had I said William,

with my sword in the rout to run:
Then here amongs mine enemies wood,
so cruelly to burne.
He took his sword and buckler then,
and among them all he ran:
Where the people thickest were,
he smote downe many a man.
There might no man abide his strokes,
so fiercely on them he ran:
Then they threw windowes and doores on him,
and so took that yeoman.
There they him bound hand and foot,
and in a deep dungeon him cast.
Now Cloudesle then said the Justice,
thou shalt be hanged in hast.
One bow shall I make said the Sheriff,
a paire of new gallowes thou shalt habe.
And all the gates of Carlile shall be shut,
there shall no man come in thereat.
There shall not help Clim of the Clough,
nor yet Adam Bell,
Though they come with a thousand moe,
nor all the devils in hell.
Early in the morning the Justice arose,
to the gates fast gan he gone:
And commanded to shut close,
lightly everychon.
Then went to the market place,
as fast as they can hie:
A paire of new gallowes there he did set up,
beside the pillory.
A little boy stood them among,
and askt what meant that gallow tree:
They said to hang a good yeoman,
called William of Cloudesle.

That

That little Boy was come swine-heard,
and kept faire Alice swine:
Full oft he had seen Cloudesle in the wood,
and gabe him there to dine:
He went out of a creb̃ice of the wall,
and lightly to the wood he ran:
There he met with these wight yeomen,
shortly and anon.
Alas then said the little boy,
you tary here all to long:
Cloudesle is tane and doom'd to death,
and ready to be hang'd,
Alas then said good Adam Bell,
that ever we saw this day:
He might habe tarryed here with us,
so oft we did him pray.
He migh habe dwelt in greene Forrell,
under these shadowes green:
And kept both him and us at rest,
out of trouble and teen.
Adam bent a right good bow,
a great hart soon he had slain:
Take that child he said to thy dinner,
and bring me mine arrow again.
Now we goe hence said these jolly yeomen,
tarry we no longer here:
We shall him borrow by Gods grace,
though we buy it full deer.
To Carlile went these good yeomen,
in a merry morning of May:
Here is a fit of Cloudesle,
and another is for to say.

AND when they came to merry Carlile,
in a faire morning tide:

They

They found the gates shut them unto,
round about on every syde,
Alas then said good Adam Bell,
that ever we were made men,
These gates are shut so wondrous well,
that we may not come therein.
Then spake Clim of the Clough,
with a wile we will us in bring:
Let us say we be messengers,
straight come from the king.
Adam said I have a Letter, well
let us wisely work:
We will say we have the kings seale,
I hold the Porter no Clerke,
Then Adam Bell beat at the gate,
with strokes great and strong:
The Porter heard such a noise thereat,
and to the gates he sprong,
Who is there, said the porter,
that maketh all this knocking?
We be two messengers said they then,
become right from the king,
We have a Letter said Adam Bell,
to the Justice we must it bring:
Let us in our message to do,
that we were again to the king,
Here commeth none in said the Porter,
by him that dyed on a tree,
Till that a false theefe be hang'd,
cal'd William of Cloudesle,
Then spake Clim of the Clough,
and swore by Mary free:
If that we stand long without,
like a theefe hang we shall bee.
Loe here we have the kings seale:

what Lurdan art thou (wood)
The Porter weend it had been so,
and lightly did off his hood.
Welcome to my Lords seale he said,
for that you shall come in:
He opened the gates full shortly,
an evill opening for him.
Now are we in (said Adam Bell,
whereof we are right faine:
But Christ he knowes assuredly,
how we shall out againe.
Had we the keyes, (said Clim of the Clough,
right well then should we speed:
Then might we come out well enough,
when we see time and need.
They called the Porter to counsell,
and wrung his neck in two:
And cast him into a deepe dungeon,
and took the keyes him fro.
Now I am Porter (said Adam Bell,
see brother the keyes we have here.
The worst Porter in merry Carlile,
that came this hundred yeere.
Now we will our horses head,
into the town will we goe:
For to deliver our dear brother,
that lieth in care and woe.
Then they bent their good yew bowes,
and looked their strings were round,
The Market place in merry Carlile,
they beset in that stound.
And as they looked them beside,
a paire of new gallowes there they see,
And Justice with a Quest of Squires,
that judged William hanged to be.

And

And Cloudesle lay ready in a Cart,
fast bound both foote and hand:
And a strong rope about his necke,
already for to hang.
The Justice cal'd to him a lad,
Cloudesles clothes he should have,
To take measure of that yeoman,
and thereby to make a grave.
I have seen as great marshalle said Cloudesle,
as betweene this and prime:
He that maketh a grave for me,
himselfe may lie therein.
Thou speakest proudly said the Justice,
I will thee hang with my hand:
Full well heard this his brethren two,
there still as they did stand.
Then William cast his eye aside,
and saw his two brethren,
At the corner of the market place well prepar'd,
ready the Justice to chase.
I see comfort said Cloudesle,
yet hope I well to fare:
If I might have my hands let free,
right little might I care.
Then spake good Adam Bell,
to Clim of the Clough so free:
Brother see you marke the Justice well,
for ponder you may him see.
At the Sheriffe shoote I will,
stongly with an arrow keene:
A better shot in merry Carlile,
this seven yeere was not seene,
They loosed their arrowes both at one,
of no man they had dread:

The one hit the Justice the other the Sheriffe,
that both their sides gan bleed,
All men prayed that good them nigh,
when the Justice fell to the ground:
And the Sheriffe vpe himself,
either had his deaths wound.
All the Citizens fast gan flee,
they durst no longer abide:
There lightly they lost Cloudesle,
where he with ropes lay tyde.
William stept to an Officer of the Towne,
his axe out of his hand he wrung:
On each side he smote them downe,
him thought he tarryed all too long.
William said to his brethren two,
this day let us live and die,
If ever you have need as I have now,
the same shall you finde by me:
They that so well had shot,
for their strings were of silke fine,
That they keep the street on euery side,
the batte bold long endure.
They fought together like brethren true,
like hardy men and bold:
Many a man to the ground they threw,
and made many a heart cold.
But when their arrowes were all gone,
men preased on them full fast:
They drew their swords then anon,
and their bowes from them cast.
They went lightly on their way,
with swords and bucklers round:
By that it were mids of the day,
they made many a wound.
Many an out horne in Carlile was blowne,

and

and the Wells backward did ring:
Many a woman said alas,
and many their hands did wring.
The Maior of Carlile hath come with,
and him with a full great rout:
These yeomen dread him full sore,
for of their lives they were in great doute.
The Maior came armed a full great pace,
with a Pollax in his hand:
Many a strong man with him was,
within that floure to stand,
The Maior smote at Cloudesle with his bill
his buckler brast in two:
Full many a yeomen with great skill,
alas treason they cryed for woe.
Keepe we the gates fast they bad,
that these Traytors thereout not goe:
But all for nought was that they wrought,
for so fast downe they were layd;
Till they all three that so manfully fought,
were gotten out at the braid.
Have here your keyes said Adam Bell,
my office here I forsake:
If you do by my counsell,
a new Porter doe you make,
He threw the keyes at their heades,
and bad them evill to thrive;
And all that letteth any good yeoman,
to come and comfort his wife,
Thus be the good yeomen gone to the wood,
as lightly as leafe on linde:
They laugh and be merry in their mood,
their enemies were farre behinde,
When they came to the Englishe wood,
under the trusty tree;

There they found bowes full good,
and arrowes great plenty.
So God me help said Adam Bell,
and Clim of the Clough so free,
I would we were in merry Carlile.
before that faire mayny.
Then sate they down and made good cheere,
and eat and drunk full well:
Here is a fit of these wight yeomen,
another I will you tell.

As they sate in English wood,
under their trusty tree:
They thought they heard a woman weep,
but her they could not see.
Anon then sighed faire Alice,
that ever I saw this day:
For now is my deere husband slain
alas and well away.
Might I have spoke with his deer brethren,
or with either of them twaine,
To shew to them what him befell,
my heart were out of paine.
Cloudesle walkt a little a side,
and look under the green wood linde.
He said his wife and children three,
full woe in heart and minde:
Welcome wife, then said William,
under this trusty tree:
I had weend yesterday by sweet S. John,
thou shouldest me never see.
Now well is me she sayd that ye be here,
my heart is out of woe:
Mame be fay be merry and glad,
and thanke my brethren two.

Yeton

Hereof to speak said Adam Bell,
I wis it is no boote:
The meete that we must sup withall,
it resteth yet fast on foote.
Then went they down unto the lawnd,
these Noblemen all three:
Each of them shewd a part of Scorne,
the best they could there see.
Now be here the best Alice my wife,
said William of Cloudesle:
Because yee so boldly stood by me,
when I was slaine full nye.
Then they went to supper,
with such meat as they had:
And thanked God for their fortune,
they merry were and glad.
And when they had supped well,
certain without any lease,
Cloudesle said we will to our King,
to get us a Charter of peace.
Alice shall be at our sojourning:
in a Nunnery here beside:
My two sonnes shall with her goe,
and there they shall abide.
My eldest sonne shall goe with me,
for him I have no care:
And he shall bring you word again,
how that we do fare.
Thus be these good yeomen to London gone,
as fast as they may hye:
Till they came to the Kings pallace,
when they would needs be.
And when they came to the Kings Court,
unto the pallace gate:
Of no man would they aske leave,

but

but boldly went in thereat,
They proceeded preſent into the Hall,
of no man they had dread:
The porter came after, and did them call,
an with them gan to chide.
The Vſher ſaid, peace what would you have
I pray you tell to me:
You might have Officers ſent,
good ſirs from whence be yee:
Sir, we be outlawes of the Forreſt,
certaine without any leaſe:
And hither we be come to the King,
to get us a charter of peace.
And when they came before the King
as it was the Law of the Land:
They kneeled down without letting,
and each held up his hand.
They ſaid Lord we beſeech thee here,
that ye will grant us grace:
For we have ſlaine your fat fallow Deere,
in many a ſundry place.
What be your names then ſaid the King,
anon that you tell me:
Adam Bell, Clim of the Clough,
and William of Cloudeſle.
Be yee thoſe theeves ſaid the King,
that men have told to me:
Here to God I make a vow,
yee ſhall be hang'd all three.
Ye ſhall be dead without mercy,
as I am King of this Land:
He commanded his Officers every one,
faſt on them to lay hand.
Therefore they tooke theſe good yeomen,
and arreſted them all three:

So may I thrive said Adam Bell,
this game liketh not me.
But good Lord we beseech you now,
that you will grant us grace,
Inasmuch as we doe to you came,
or else that we may from you passe,
With such weapons as we have here,
till we be out of your place:
And if we live this hundreth yeere.
we will aske of you no grace.
Ye speake proudly said the King,
ye shall be hanged all three,
That were great pity said the Queene,
if any grace might be.
My Lord when I came first into this Land
to be your wedded wife,
The first boone that I would aske,
you would grant me belike:
And I asked ye neber none till now,
therefore good Lord grant it me.
Now aske it, Madam, said the King,
and granted shall it be.
Then good Lord I you beseech,
these yeomen grant you me:
Madam ye might have asked a boone,
that should have been worth them all three:
Ye might have asked towres and towns,
Parkes and Forrests plenty:
None so pleasant to my pay she said,
nor none so leake to me.
Madam sith it is your desire,
your asking granted shall be:
But I had lever have given you
good [illegible]
The Queen was a glad woman,

and said Lord graunted.
I dare under take for them,
that true men they shall be:
But good Lord speake some merry word,
that they might comfort see.
I grant you grace then said the King,
with fellowes, and to meate goe yee.
They had not sitten but a while,
certain without leasing:
There came two messengers out of the North,
with letters to the King.
And when they came before the King,
they kneeled down upon their knee:
And said your Officers great you well,
of Carlile in the North Country.
How fareth my Justice (said the King)
and my Sheriffe also:
Sir they be slain without leasing,
and many an Officer moe:
Who hath them slain said the King,
anon that you tell me:
Adam Bell. Clim of the Clough,
and William of Cloudesle.
Alas for truth then said the King,
my heart is wondrous sore:
I had lever then a thousand pound,
I had known this before,
For I have granted them grace,
and that forethinketh me:
But had I known all this before,
they had been hanged all three.
The King opened the letter anon,
himself he read it thro:
And there he found how these outlawes had slain,
three hundred men and moe.

First the Justice and the Shyriffe,
and the Mayor of Carlile town,
Of all the Constables and Catchpoles,
alive he left not one.
The Bailiffes and the Beadles both,
and the Sergeants of the Law:
And every Forrester of the fee,
these outlawes have yslaw,
And broke his Parks and slain his deer,
of all they chose the best:
So perillous outlawes as they were,
walked not by East nor West.
When the King this Letter had read,
in heart he sighed full sore:
Take up the Table then said he,
for I can eat no more.
The King then called his best Archers,
to the Buts with him to goe:
I will see these fellows shoot said he
that in the North have wrought this woe.
The Kings Bowmen bussht them blith,
and the Queens Archers also:
So did these wight yeomen,
with them they thought to goe:
There twice or thrice they shot about,
for to assay their hand:
There was no shoote these yeomen shot,
that any prycke might stand.
Then spake William of Cloudesle,
by him that for me dyed;
I hold him never good Archer,
that shooteth at Buts so wide.
Whereat then said the King,
I pray thee tell to me:
At such a But sir he said,

as men use in country.
William went into the field,
and his two brethen with him,
There they set up two hasall rods,
twenty score pace betweene:
I hold him an Archer said Cloudesle,
that yonder wand cleabeth in two:
Here is none such, said the king,
for no man can so doe.
I shall assay sir, said Cloudesle,
or that I further goe:
Cloudesle with a bearing arrow,
clabe the wand in two.
Thou art the best Archer, said the king,
forsooth that ever I see:
And yet for your love said William
I will doe more mastery,
I have a sonne is seven yeere old,
he is to me full dere:
I will tie him to a stake,
all shall see him that be here,
And lay an apple upon his head,
and goe fifty score pace him fro,
And I my selfe with a bend arrow,
shall cleave the apple in two.
Now hast thee then, said the king,
by him that dyed on a tree,
But if thou dost not as thou hast said,
Hanged shalt thou be,
And if thou touch his head for thy game,
in sight that man may see:
By all the Saints that be in heaven,
I shall you hang all three:
That I have promised said William,
I never will forsake:

And

And there euen before the King,
in the earth he drove a stake,
And bound thereto his eldest sonne,
and bad him stand still thereat:
And turn the childs face him fro,
because he should not start.
An apple upon his head he set,
and then his bow he bent:
Fiftcore paces there were met,
and thither Cloudesle went.
There he drew out a faire broad arrow,
his bow was great and long:
He set that arrow in his bow,
which was both stiffe and strong.
He prayed the people that were there:
that they would still stand:
For he that shooteth for such a wager,
had need of a steddy hand.
Much people prayed for Cloudesle,
that his life saued might be:
And when he made him ready to shoot,
there was many a weeping eye:
Thus Couldesle clabe the Apple in two,
as many a man might see:
Now God forbid then, said the King,
that thou shouldest shoote at me.
I gibe thee xviii. pence a day,
and my bow shalt thou beare:
And euer all the North Country,
I make thee chiefe Archer:
And ile gibe thee xiii. pence a day, said the Queene,
by God, and by my fay,
Come fetch thy payment when thou wilt,
no man shall say thee nay.
William, I make thee a Gentleman,

of clothing and of fee:
And thy two brethren yeoman of my Chamber,
for they are lovely to see:
Your sonne for he is tender of age,
of my wine seller shall be,
And when he comes to mans estate,
better preferred shall be.
And William bring me your wife, said the Queen.
I long full sore to see:
She shall be my chief Gentlewoman,
to governe my Nursery.
The yeomen thanked them full curteously,
and said to some Bishop we will wend,
Of all the sinnes that we have done,
to be assoyled at his hond.
So forth be gone these good yeomen,
as fast as they can hie.
And after came and lived with the King,
and died good yeomen all three.
Thus endeth the lives of these good yeomen,
God send them eternall blisse:
And all that with hand bow shooteth,
that of heaven may never misse.

FINIS.